

Blaxhall Village Newsletter



Summer 2022

Summer Spectacular



It's pretty rare that we have three 'big' events to report on in one edition of the newsletter, but this time around we find ourselves looking back on the Jubilee celebrations, the Patronal Festival and the Village Fete, so it's exciting times indeed! The 4 days of Jubilee events enjoyed a fantastic turnout, while the football-themed Patronal Festival that followed raised a record total, in no small part thanks to the fact that almost every Blaxhall businesses sponsored a team.

Next up, the Fete, took place on one of the hottest days of the year, but the troops soldiered on, the visitors came, and another great day was had by all (not least because *Bowling for the Pig* has at last returned after being AWOL for a generation!).

We have individual reports on all of those inside, but suffice to say that all were a great success, thanks to the hard work and generosity of those involved, and a rare summer that saw all three go off without any significant rain!

Also inside, Chapter IV of the epic fibre broadband saga - and finally we have a major breakthrough! The History Page, meanwhile, has a feature on the church tower, there's the latest from The Ship, and news of the Commons and Open Spaces Trust.



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St Peter's Festival

The Day dawned clear, the flowers were finished, the cakes were baked and the plants patterned the entrance to the church like a treasure trove, preluding the pleasures ahead.....and we were off, full swing into the festival; celebrating the Feast of St Peter in style!

Actually, St Peter and footballers have a lot in common: usually dedicated and hard-working, always loyal and honest, sometimes misguided and fearful; the list could go on. So, it is little wonder that the unlikely theme of football fitted neatly into a religious feast day. And to many people football IS a religion; hurrah for that! I'm sure God is keen on anything that encourages us to be the best person we can be. Bill said as much in his sermon at the Patronal Service: Saint or sinner? He asked us; poor old St Peter must've been dreading the reply! Thank goodness God doesn't care, so we and the footballers and St Peter are safe!



And our hard work paid off; £3,800 was raised to kick start the "TOWER FUND". Readers of the Ebb and Flow will know that rain and rust have led to severe instability in the bell-tower. Locals will have noticed that the bells haven't been rung since before the pandemic. The PCC have regarded the architects preliminary report with dismay: £200,000 needs to be raised before the bells can be rung regularly again. That's more than 50 festivals.....Good God!





Village Hall & Playing Field

Jubilee Celebration

On 2nd June we had a good crowd at the Kenny French memorial beacon. We had drinks and nibbles and the beacon was lit at precisely 9.45 as was the order. The fire burned extremely well and kept going for a good hour whilst we moved to the covered seating and continued a very convivial evening.

On the Saturday we gathered again in celebration of Queen Elizabeth's remarkable 70 years on the throne. Sheila and her team provided us with a proper 'Blaxhall tea'. Miranda organised games and a good crowd of Blaxhall people and folks from nearby had a very enjoyable afternoon. Many thanks to Joy for all her organising and all the many people who helped make it a thoroughly lovely Blaxhall day.

Boules Piste

We also made it the grand opening of the Boules Piste which was a great success. My thanks again to the small band of workers who created it.

Since the opening it was thought that the piste was a little soft under the granite chippings, so three of us spent a long day removing the top two layers and replacing the middle layer with a harder material and hammered it down with a much heavier wacker plate than we had originally used, finally replacing the top layer. It now plays extremely well and I look forward to playing folk from other villages as well as Blaxhall enthusiasts. Special thanks to Martin and Graham A for their valued time and effort.

Christmas Party

I know it's too early to mention the C word but save the date, Saturday 10th December, for a cracking good party with music from Dave and John. More details in future newsletters.

Fete

It was with great excitement that Naomi and I attended Blaxhall Fete as punters. Running a stall and organising things at the Fete over the years has been a great pleasure but it was time for a team of new blood to take over the running, and what a splendid job they did. My thanks to Joy and all who helped and made it an even better event whilst keeping the traditional atmosphere. It was a pleasure to be able to walk around and have a go at all the attractions, take time to talk to people and indulge in the wonderful Blaxhall tea and cakes.

Next year's fete is already in the planning. We need more volunteers to man the stalls and generally help. So watch out for news of the next meeting, probably in November.

Graham

The Ship



From the owner, Terence Davey, August, 2022.

Your Blaxhall Ship Inn remains open despite all the many and various difficulties of the 2022 hospitality trade.

The unpleasantly hot weather of this extraordinary summer has had a damping effect on footfall and the continuing closure of the road between Blaxhall and the Tourist Centre of Snape has lost us even more trade.

However; Mitch, Martin and the crew have been working hard and doing a good job in keeping us afloat.

It seems that the affection with which the Folk World and the friends of the Blaxhall Ship have for the old Pub, with all its traditions of Freedom, Good Fellowship and an Open Venue for performance, has so far, beaten the current trend for limited opening hours or permanent closure.

I would like to thank everyone who contributes towards the continuing existence of the Blaxhall Ship Inn and; I hope you all overcome this impending and world-wide financial crises. Meanwhile; we shall try to keep the old Blaxhall Ship warm for you.



The tradition of singing at The Ship goes back at least 150 years, but became famous during the 1950s and 60s.

The Ship Inn
Blaxhall
Summer Festival

WITH LIVE MUSIC FROM
7.30 pm **HANDLE WITH CARE**
3pm - 6pm **SHIP OPEN MIC PERFORMERS**
1pm - 3pm **JOHN & LYNNE WARD**

FREE Entry — **Outside Bar**
BBQ - Cocktails
Sat 3rd
September

Tower Trouble

Those of you paying attention will very likely have become aware in recent months that a fundraising campaign is underway to repair the church tower. It's an expensive business, unfortunately, and one that crops up every few decades, but for me at least, a worthwhile one.

Built some 700 years ago, largely from local flint, and 'only' 60 feet tall, there's nothing overly special about it if we're honest, save the distinctive red-brick crown. That aside, there are hundreds of similar flint towers across Suffolk and Norfolk. The photo on the right, though, taken around $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up, reminds me just how high 60' actually is, how amazing it is that our ancestors built it at all, with just wooden scaffolding, hemp rope and basic pulleys to slowly raise the flint & lime mortar walls, and haul massive oak beams skywards - and how impressive it is to still be standing after all those centuries totally exposed to the easterly elements.



Some 20 years ago, when writing for the Blaxhall website, I postulated about the origins of that brick repair, which to this day remains uncertain.

"...the growing population apparently decided that their church tower would benefit greatly from the addition of several hundredweight of new bronze, as a result of which John Brend of Norwich was approached

to do the business. The Brend family had been casting church bells for at least 3 generations, and Blaxhall was supplied with 5 excellent examples in 1655, either as upgrades or a totally new feature. It seems however that this may have been a rather improvident act, since 20 years later the parishioners were firing out petitions in a desperate attempt to raise money for St Peter's church & steeple, which they described as being "so ruinous that they are in great danger of harm when they attend divine service". The mere fact that our old edifice is still there seems to be adequate proof that the £250 required was successfully raised, and it seems highly possible that this major repair resulted in the red brick crown so long associated with St Peter's tower. The closeness of the dates perhaps begs the question of whether the sudden arrival of 1½ tons of



fresh bronze lurching around may have come as something of a shock to the 200+ year old tower, especially when combined with the structural impact of the four large windows intended to let the sound out; could the stress of these changes have accelerated the need for repair?..."

Whether or not there's any truth to the bells theory, we'll probably never know, but one certainty is that the need for repairs is ongoing, as the crack in the photo (left) demonstrates, but it would surely be a great shame to let our watch be the one that failed.

Blaxhall Commons & Open Spaces Charitable Trust

On 31st July, BCOST held a consultation meeting in the village hall, to which all Stone Common residents and allotment holders were invited. The purpose of the meeting was to present for feedback our draft Management Plan for the land at Stone Common which was kindly donated to us by Mr Michael Prevost. The plan – which is available on our website <https://blaxhallcommons.com> – entails retaining sufficient allotments and grazing land to meet local demand whilst gradually restoring and managing the remaining areas primarily as acid grassland (a nationally rare habitat which is native to this area and rich in biodiversity). Allotment fees will be kept in line with those payable at the Mill Common allotments.

Now that bird-nesting season is over, BCOST work parties have begun again, mainly focussed on bracken control at both Jasper's Pightle and Stone Common. We are also very grateful to all those local residents who have helped the trustees to keep the fruit trees which were planted in the winter and spring supplied with water during the summer's drought.

If anyone would like to join future work parties, or to become involved in BCOST's activities and management, we are always keen to welcome new faces as well as old friends. If you would like to be kept informed, email our Hon Secretary, Eve Rossor, on everossor@gmail.com.

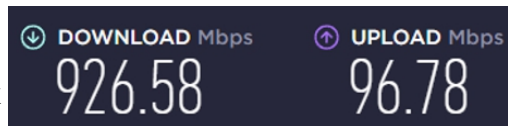
Jubilee and Fete Photos

After two years of lockdown we were spoilt for action this summer, with Jubilee, Fete and Festival. Below are a few more photos that we've managed to squeeze in, from the Jubilee (top left, top right and bottom left) and the Fete. Most important of all so far as I'm concerned was the welcome return of Bowling for the Pig, after an absence of around two decades!




Fibre Broadband - Chapter 4

Some 10 months after first spotting FTTP equipment being fitted to the poles along Rectory Road I can finally break the news that the infrastructure is complete and switched on! I received my own installation back in mid July, resulting in a healthy 900mb+ download speed.



Openreach's sources are a little unclear, but it looks as though the availability stretches all the way along Rectory Road, part of Station Road and part of Church Road. It would very much appear that they're prioritising properties far enough from the School Hill cabinet to receive a maximum speed of less than 25mb, so while those within 1000m or so of the cabinet will be reached eventually, it may not be quite yet. Meanwhile, a couple of residents who live less than 150m from that cabinet have recently told me they have very poor speeds, which is frankly inexcusable. They both use BT for their broadband, but my own experience, and that of people I know, strongly suggests that to consistently get the best from your connection it is often desirable to use one of the smaller, but more performance orientated, internet providers, such as Uno or Zen, rather than the likes of BT or Talk Talk. The latter promise much but have a tendency to underperform in reality, while their routers (home hubs) leave something to be desired. The top 10 list at www.ispreview.co.uk is a good starting point.



Top 10 UK Broadband ISPs

1. AAISP	★★★★★
2. uno	★★★★★
3. iDNET	★★★★★
4. Aguiss	★★★★★
5. Hyperoptic	★★★★★
6. Zen Internet	★★★★★
7. Your Coop	★★★★★
8. Sky Broadband	★★★★★
9. Origin Broadband	★★★★★
10. BT	★★★★★

Returning to the new full fibre, as I mentioned a few months back, you have to physically order FTTP (aka ultrafast fibre or full fibre), from either your current provider or a different one, it won't just 'happen' automatically even if the infrastructure has reached your area. The waiting time from ordering to installation is generally around 3 weeks.

Play Reading Sessions in Blaxhall

With the darker days and nights looming, and the heat receding, now is the time for something new!!



Blaxhall is starting regular play reading sessions. Light hearted fun evenings, finding different plays, meeting new people, and breaking the monotony of the darker nights! No experience required, just an enjoyment of a play to be shared with others.

Days, times, and venue to be decided, but in the first instance to register your interest contact - Maggie at magsnordic@gmail.com, giving your contact details.

ST PETER'S CHURCH BLAXHALL HARVEST FESTIVAL

**Sunday 18 September
at 10am**

**Afterwards at 12.30 lunch
will be served
in the village hall**

**Tickets for lunch
£7.50 adults, £4 under 16
from Sheila Scopes 688178**

All very welcome



Parish Councillors

Graham Bowles	01728 688192 (Chairman)	Karen Baker	01728 688200
Shane Pictor	01728 688205	Ray Herring	01728 746337
Jonathan Cutting	01728 688003	Mark Oakley	01728 687507
Joanne Peters	01394 459400 (Parish Clerk)		

Suffolk Coastal District Councillor - Ray Herring 07885 249218

ray.herring@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Suffolk County Councillor - Andrew Reid 07545 423799 andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk

Copies of minutes and agendas can be found at <http://blaxhall.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/>

Parish Council meetings are held in the Village Hall at 7.30 and are open to all parishioners, the public and press. The 2022 dates are: **Wednesday 12th January, Wednesday 2nd March, Wednesday 4th May, Wednesday 6th July, Wednesday 7th September** and **Wednesday 2nd November**.

Community Transport – “Connecting Communities” **01728 635938** The service booking line operates 08.45am to 4pm, Mon-Fri. You can book a pick-up with “Katch” bus service by using the app, or by phoning **01728 554455**.

Blaxhall Commons & Open Spaces Charitable Trust – www.blaxhallcommonstrust.org

For contact details of all trustees ring Mark Oakley 01728 687507

The **Mobile Library** comes to Blaxhall, and stops at **The Youth Hostel 9.35 – 10am** calling every 4 weeks on Wednesdays: the upcoming dates are, **21 September, 19 October, 16 November, 14 December**

Large print, Audio & Childrens' books, also CDs and DVDs are available for a small charge. Contact Pete Wells or Helen Hudson on help@suffolklibraries.co.uk, visit the website <http://suffolkreads.onesuffolk.net/libraries-and-mobiles/> or phone **01473 584563**

To put something in the Village Noticeboard, please ring Graham Bowles 01728 688192
To put something in the Newsletter email to shane@blaxhall.com tel. 01728 688205

Allotment information contact Sophie Martin on 07724 356916,
Blaxhall.Allotments@gmail.com